NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

Vol. 44/No. 4

January/February 2001

Is Anybody Listening?

by LESLEY-ANN BROWNE

As Communications Officer I find it beneficial to monitor local and national media to track views and comments about education. This is also helpful to ensure that we are being quoted properly and fairly from interviews and news releases. In a recent scan of media headlines, surprisingly it was not an education article that grabbed my attention, but an editorial on health care.

The editorial in question announced the new and improved cafeteria services in two local hospitals in the St. John's area. Although this may be welcome news for hospital staff and visitors, I have to question the logic of such an announcement. Why were renovations done to cafeterias when there are so many inadequacies within health care? I ask the same question about education.

In recent weeks my experiences with the hospitals have unfortunately been many. As I sat in my mom's hospital room watching overworked hospital personnel do their jobs I could not help but compare the situation with education. We know that in both health care and education there is a shortage of staff, resources are limited and funding is often unavailable. In both professions staffs are overworked and the downloading of more responsibility is continuous.

During my hospital visits I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing several of these inadequacies. They prepped my mother for surgery, wheeled her to the operating room and discovered that "some one" had not reviewed her blood tests. An operation would have resulted in major complications. I also saw the shortages, the overworked staff, and witnessed the holes in the bedsheets and blankets.

So in health care in this province, like education, people can slip through the cracks. It is very difficult, however, to blame the people doing the jobs. Health care professionals, like teachers, are doing the best they can with limited resources. The fault does not lie at this level.

Education and health are two areas that cannot be cut any further. Both need additional resources, money and staff. The issues facing the professionals who work within the two fields are very similar. But it is easier to get more sympathy and attention for health care. A person ill from lack of medical attention is more heart wrenching and immediately serious than a child not getting the best education because of lack of textbooks. But both are critical to the future of this province. I have read about several studies that have shown that one of the best investments governments can make in health care is the improvement of public education. These studies argue that an educated population is healthier, earns higher incomes, and has fewer citizens in need of social assistance.

I have to question why I am not continuously seeing editorials in our local papers about the lack of resources for education and health care. We don't need new cafeterias as much as we need trained teachers and health care professionals. Teachers and health care workers must be paid the money to keep them in this province, and provided with the proper resources so they can do the jobs that they have been trained to do. What will it take before the decision makers realize the extent of the inadequacies and problems? I was as grateful as the next person for a place to eat last week during my vigil at the hospital, but revamped cafeterias should, I think, be the last priority.

THE bulletin

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The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1.
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Subscription Rate: $16 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
April Issue: March 1
May Issue: April 1

ISSN-1189-9662

Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, Canadian Public Relations Society, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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UNDERGROUND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ALL TOO OFTEN, AS TEACHERS, WE work in isolation. The literature abounds with references for the need to increase contact and communication between teachers as they perform their classroom duties.

We proceed to teach our students and classes to the best of our ability with little input from our colleagues. The only visitors to our classrooms are those that come as part of an evaluatory exercise. The challenge, then, is to find a way to become reflective in our practice and at the same time assist each other in our teaching.

One school in the province has found a way to do just that. This school, which shall remain unnamed, has begun to utilize substitute teacher time in such a way so as to allow for a peer evaluation process. At this school, when substitutes are called in for a teacher who has a preparation period, the substitutes are being used to free up a teacher so that he/she can observe other teachers in action.

This process benefits both the observer and the observed. The observer is exposed to other modes of classroom instruction and the teacher being observed can avail of a constructive critique of his/her class by a colleague. This process is more effective, in this author's opinion, because the observation is not part of a formal evaluation process and it involves a colleague.

This is an idea that should be utilized much more frequently. It is something that should not need to be done "under the table". If each school in the province was provided two days for every five teachers it would mean each teacher could observe a colleague twice per year. There is a cost of approximately $500,000 to implement this plan, but if the government is truly interested in promoting classroom level reform then what better way to promote improved communication between teachers. After all, if government can afford to provide millions of dollars for golf courses, trailways, etc., surely they can find the money for the education of our children.

A concerned teacher who
wishes to remain anonymous

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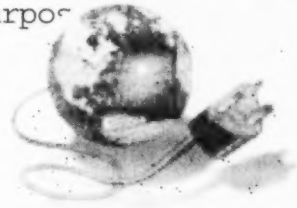

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NEWS

CONCEPTION HARBOUR

Students win national poster contest awards

Two Grade 5 students from St. Anne's Elementary in Conception Harbour were honoured by MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) this past November. Teri Leigh Trahey and Deidre Wade placed second and third in a national poster contest sponsored by MADD. This contest is dedicated to Matthew Paul Carvalho who was killed February 15, 1990 by a drunk driver. The first place winner was a student from Richmond, British Columbia.

Teri Leigh's poster stated "If you were really thinking, then why were you drinking", and Deidre's stated "I trusted you. Was the drinking worth it?". Sharon Smith, treasurer of Newfoundland's Avalon Chapter of MADD presented Teri Leigh and Deidre with monetary prizes of $150 and $100 respectively, as well as their posters mounted on plaques.

Sharon Smith of MADD presents Teri Leigh and Deidre with their contest awards.

SHOAL HARBOUR

School e-mail exchange provides excellent learning opportunity

In September 2000, Paul Green's Grade 6 class at Balbo Elementary School in Shoal Harbour established an e-mail exchange with a Grade 6 class from Broadstone Middle School in Poole, Dorset, England. Students correspond weekly through e-mail, sending information on weather, geography, lifestyles, tourism, etc. Mr. Green says this relationship is significant since so many of our ancestors have originated from the Dorset and Poole areas of England. "The exchange has provided an opportunity for students to develop their technical skills while learning about another culture, all the while, having fun. The students are excited about the project and they love the idea of receiving e-mail from another part of the world. It's a great relationship and an excellent learning opportunity." Mr. Green's students have created a display of the pictures and e-mail sent thus far. The project will continue until the end of the school year.

Paul Green's Grade 6 class at Balbo Elementary School.

COTTRELL'S COVE

School breakfast program a huge success

In November of 1998 Cottrell's Cove Academy identified the need for a breakfast program as part of its school improvement program. The breakfast committee, headed by Mrs. Karen White, applied for and received funding from the School Children's Food Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now in its third year, it is a highly successful program and continues to receive support from the School

Children's Food Foundation as well as the community. "Support has been overwhelming with some 40 volunteers who come on a rotational basis to serve breakfast to our 50 students," says Albert Garland, Science teacher at Cottrell's Cove Academy. "School staff have noted the positive effect on student morale and improved performance in class. The students are very appreciative of this program as witnessed by the lovely note of thanks Mrs. White accepted from the students on behalf of the breakfast committee."

STEPHENVILLE

Stephenville High off to National Robotics Championships

Stephenville High School will once again be competing in the Canada FIRST National Robotics Championships to be held at Centennial College in Scarborough, Ontario in March, 2001. The Stephenville High team will be returning on the heels of an extremely successful showing at the 2000 competition where they placed first in the Engineering Design Excellence category, as well as placing in the top three of several other categories.

The students were informed in early January about the device description for this year's competition and the sporting event to be promoted. They will work with a team of mentors over an eight week period to design and construct a remote controlled robotic device that will compete against 27 other teams from across Canada and the United States. Canada FIRST provides competition incorporating the internet, video, electronics, robotics and several other disciplines to explore applied technology in a unique way. The 2001 games is the eighth such event and is about building bridges between industry, business, secondary and post-secondary institutions, and young men and women.

The students will compete with other students in a form of "Robot Games", an athletic type competition in which robots play a sport. The students collaborate with teacher advisors, private industry technologists, and engineers, to complete the work. They are responsible for all aspects of the project including design and construction, financial details, detailed documentation of each phase of the program, production of videos, design and maintenance of a web page, communications with Canada FIRST, and the presentation of the finished product. They are also expected to maintain their academics over the life of the project. "These students are keen and are very dedicated in their commitment to their project and to their academic life," says Eric Nippard, one of the lead teachers from Stephenville High. "The amount of time demanded during the eight weeks dictates that students be highly organized, mature, have excellent work ethics, and be able to work in a demanding, stressful, competitive, team environment. I believe that we have the students to meet those expectations."

Participation in the Canada FIRST Robotics Games is a major financial undertaking which can only be accomplished with the help and support of sponsors. Abitibi Consolidated has again agreed to provide monetary help and a team of mentors from their mill in Stephenville. "The Abitibi group has been tremendous in their support of this venture. They have responded in a very positive manner to integrating industry with education in the community and we look forward to another successful competition in March," says Mr. Nippard.

STEPHENVILLE CROSSING

Forum on Youth Violence 2000

This past October, approximately 200 students from Assumption High School in Stephenville Crossing and Piccadilly Central High School, Piccadilly, took part in a Forum on Youth Violence. This Forum was part of a research project with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick.

Through rural community developed violence prevention days, high school students have an opportunity to share their experiences and become better informed as to the people and services dedicated to violence prevention in their local area. The activity is aimed at developing a prototype for violence prevention which is gender appropriate and which will support a whole community long-term initiative.

Students from Assumption High School and Piccadilly Central High explore methods for dealing with youth violence.

Throughout the day, the students reflected upon their experiences with physical as well as psychological aggression and explored appropriate ways of addressing violence when it arises.

Prior to the actual Forum day, organizers Tom George, Psychologist with the Cormack Trail School District and Ruth George, Guidance Counsellor at Assumption High School, participated in a day-long training session at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre with Dr. Ann Cameron, Project Coordinator.

Community workers engage students in a discussion on violence prevention.

In addition to the support of the Centre, the organizers recognize the contribution of the Cormack Trail School District and the NLTA.

CORNER BROOK

Students develop storytelling skills at Young Author's Workshop

On November 23, at Sacred Heart Elementary School in Corner Brook, School District #3 hosted a district-wide workshop for 110 young authors from Grades 4 to 6. Fourteen elementary schools nominated students to take part from Corner Brook and the Bay of Islands, Hampden, Pollards Point, Deer Lake, and the Northern Peninsula. All students shared a real interest in writing and a motivation to develop their storytelling skills and investigate ways of publication.

Thirteen workshops were offered by teachers and community volunteers: *Awakening the Hidden Storyteller* (Dan Murphy); *Telling Stories: An Introduction to Journalism* (Jeff Ducharme); *The Power of Storytelling* (Jerome Jesseau); *Creating a Play from Your Story* (Wynann Downer); *Writing with Pizzazz* (Glenys Butler); *From Scribbles to a Book* (Don Downer); *Putting Your Story to Song* (Charlie Mercer); *Publishing Your Own Book* (Deb McWhirter); *Illustrating Your Story* (Eileen Murphy); *Story in a Bag* (Glenda Wayson); *Writing in the Round* (Maureen Fatkin); *Exploring Through the Senses* (Betty King); and *Autobio Poetry* (Debbie Howe).

Teachers who attended were able to circulate through some of the different workshops and take the strategies back to their own schools to use in their classrooms or in writing clubs. "When the children are at workshops like this, they bring a lot of enthusiasm back to the schools and it's good to see them so positive," said one teacher who attended the workshop.

"It's a very positive thing, and it's basically a chance for students to showcase their talents," said another. "These kids are on task and self motivated. It reminds me of why I do this."

Information on the workshop can be obtained by contacting Bill Allan, Co-ordinator of Enrichment, School District #3, 709-637-4021.

ST. JOHN'S

Peer mediation has positive effect on junior high students

Peer mediation is having a positive effect on the student population of Leary's Brook Junior High School in St. John's. To date, 20 students have received training along with three teachers and the guidance counsellor who act as advisors to the program.

The program began in January 2000 and has as its main goal, conflict resolution through peer mediation. Students are taught to understand conflict, to deal with conflict in a positive way, necessary training and skills to resolve their problems, healthy ways to solve problems, and to develop a different way of thinking. "This is an excellent program," says Rick Canning, Principal of Leary's Brook. "It benefits the students who are trained, as well as the students they mediate".

A Grade 9 student states, "peer mediation has taught me how to cooperate and get along with other students. It has shown me that there are other ways to solve problems besides being aggressive. There are fewer conflicts in our school and I have learned to control anger more effectively."

Paula George, the school's guidance counsellor, says that the program has generated positive response throughout the school community. "Peer mediation has had a positive and far reaching effect on the student population and continues to play a vital role in improving the school community through relationship building and problem solving. The program not only helps in the resolution of peer disputes, it also increases student participation, develops leadership skills, builds self-esteem, improves communication skills and promotes a sense of community among students."

Students interview gold medalist during Sydney 2000 Olympics

During the Sydney 2000 Olympics, the Grade 6 students of Roncalli Elementary and several Grade 7 students of St. Paul's Junior High in St. John's became part of the "Hello Sydney" project as they interviewed Simon Whitfield, the gold medalist for the sport of triathlon, via teleconference.

The "Hello Sydney" project was designed by CBC, Bell and Nortel to connect school children in 15 different locales throughout Canada to Canadian athletes participating in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. These "Hello Sydney" segments, hosted by Ron MacLean, appeared daily on CBC television during the CBC Olympic coverage at 10:30 a.m. Newfoundland time and they lasted for five minutes. The interviews then continued on the CBC webcast for another 20 minutes.

On September 30, a traveling camera crew was stationed at St. Paul's School. This crew linked up with Ron MacLean at the broadcast center in Sydney, and to Simon Whitfield at Canada Olympic House at Macquerie University, Sydney. The three locations were linked together by Bell with advanced video conferencing on telecommunications networks. Through the efforts of our local companies, Aliant and Eastern Audio, a large screen was set up in the gym so parents, students, teachers and invited guests could watch the entire webcast live.

"The show was fantastic," says Pat Smith, Learning Resources Teacher at Roncalli Elementary. "The students were prepared as they asked excellent questions and their Olympic song, written by Roncalli teacher, Kim Short, sounded great. Ron MacLean was given a little information about each of the students who appeared on television and he worked their bios in a way that made you think he knew them himself. Simon Whitfield was excellent as well and really answered the questions thoughtfully."

To view the Roncalli webcast and other memories of this "Hello Sydney" event, visit Roncalli's web page at www.res.k12.nf.ca/hellosydney/home.htm.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Initiative aimed at improving reading levels of primary students

The Department of Education is spearheading several initiatives this school year to improve the reading levels of primary school children.

Consultations on the *Strategic Literacy Plan* and the *Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom* indicate more emphasis must be placed on ensuring children can read at the Grade 3 level by the end of primary school. The Department of Education recognizes the need for additional professional development in this area to achieve this objective; therefore, it has invested an additional $900,000 in teacher professional development this school year. The new money is mainly targeted at professional development activities in the area of reading. This brings the total budget for professional development to $5.2 million for the 2000-01 fiscal year.

In collaboration with school districts, the department will provide every primary teacher in the province with two days of professional development in teaching children to read. Close to 70 teachers will be trained as tutors. Reading specialist positions have been created in all geographical school districts. A proposal has been made to increase instruction time in core areas of language arts and mathematics in primary grades.

Programs have also been initiated to identify children with reading problems, including testing to ensure students can read by the end of Grade 3. Starting in May, the language arts testing program will be expanded. Grade 3 students will be examined on all aspects of language arts – listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing. An assessment of Grade 3 students will be conducted each year for the next three years, instead of once every three years. This rigorous level of testing will enable teachers and parents to monitor students' skills on a regular basis and provide early intervention to assist children having problems.

The department is also collaborating with other Atlantic provinces on information related to literacy development for teachers, administrators and parents.

Education Minister Judy Foote believes these measures and the involvement of all stakeholders will help to achieve the goal of ensuring all students know how to read and write before they finish primary school.

Department of Education offers fellowship and bursary programs

The Language Programs Section of the Department of Education offers fellowship and bursary programs for teachers.

Teacher Fellowships are offered to French Teachers or teachers who will teach French. The purpose is to assist teachers to enhance their professional qualifications and enable them to teach French as a second language in Newfoundland and Labrador. Financial assistance for teachers without dependents is $4,250 per semester, and $5,250 per semester for teachers with dependents. The financial assistance is for a total of two semesters.

Teacher Bursaries are offered to encourage teachers to improve their linguistic and pedagogical skills in French through attendance at an accredited post-secondary institution in Canada during the spring or summer. Financial assistance is in the amount of $310 per week to a maximum of six weeks for study in a French milieu in Canada, or $200 per course to a maximum of two French courses at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

The deadline for applications for both the Fellowship and Bursary programs is March 2, 2001. For further information contact Cynthia Murphy, Language Programs Section, Department of Education, Tel: 709-729-6604/2741; Fax: 709-729-4845; E-mail: cynthiamurphy@mail.gov.nf.ca.

Educating students about dealing with cancer challenges

The mission of RealTime Cancer is to increase awareness and educate our community about preventing and dealing with cancer challenges through sharing the patient's perspective. Founded by St. John's native Geoff Eaton, the main message of RealTime Cancer and the major education initiative, the RealTime Cancer Challenge, is "positive attitude, choice and action in the face of a cancer challenge". The Challenge is all about sharing that positive attitude message.

The name "RealTime Cancer" originates from Geoff Eaton's desire to re-create his cancer challenge for a whole new audience, in 'real time'. "Our major awareness/education initiative, the RealTime Cancer Challenge, involves re-broadcasting my e-mail messages that chronicled, and still chronicle, my battle with cancer (a.k.a. My Series)." Students gain access to Geoff's cancer experience through open and direct e-mail contact that will be interactive allowing the students to learn and take from the experience what they wish. The e-mail component is complemented with personal interaction as well as student/school initiatives encouraging student involvement and participation in the fight against cancer. The audience will experience the Challenge in 'real time' as if the experience is actually happening. A major objective of executing that 'real time' element of the Challenge, is providing great detail about the patient's perspective.

High school students represent the primary target audience of RealTime Cancer. "I have chosen to focus my efforts on the high school audience as at 25 I am near their age, a peer of sorts," says Eaton. "I was 22 when originally diagnosed with Leukemia. It is my plan and mission to provide high school students with exposure and knowledge of cancer challenges, in hopes that they will carry the experience and the message of positive attitude with them throughout the rest of their lives. When faced with a cancer challenge, or any challenge, you are always best to possess a positive attitude, make positive choices, and take positive action," states Eaton.

The RealTime Cancer message is not limited to high school students, as educational initiatives are open to the community. The fight for life against cancer is a community fight that involves awareness and education accordingly. The major differentiating factor of RealTime Cancer is the emotional connection established with the audience. Most organizations provide a breadth of experiences to their target audiences, with very little depth. RealTime Cancer takes the opposite approach by providing exposure to one cancer experience in great detail, thus allowing the students to learn about the process of dealing with a cancer challenge from the patient's perspective. And it develops great emotional connection between Geoff Eaton and the audience, providing the foundation for involvement in the fight for life against cancer.

For more information contact Geoff Eaton at geoff@realtimecancer.org.

AUBREY JOSEPH MATTHEWS, 1919 – 2000

The community of Burgeo lost one of its outstanding citizens with the passing of Aubrey Joseph Matthews on November 20, 2000 at the Interfaith Home, Corner Brook, at the age of 81.

Aubrey began his teaching career at Red Island in 1941 after completing a Teacher Training Course at Memorial College. He loved teaching in the one-room school at Red Island, and returned to that community in September 1942 for his second year. However, since a newly established fish plant in Burgeo enticed so many of the residents to relocate there, the government decided to shorten the school year in Red Island to five months. In 1943, Aubrey was offered a teaching position in the four-room school in his hometown of Burgeo where he taught for the next 36 years. He retired in 1979 after 38 years of teaching.

Aubrey was truly dedicated to the teaching profession with his keen sense of perfection and discipline, his patience and compassion, ability to create an atmosphere conducive to good learning and his friendly, pleasant personality. One could honestly classify him as the Master Teacher and model citizen.

Over the years Aubrey participated fully and lovingly in community affairs, particularly in his church, as a Sunday School superintendent, choir member and various offices in the church. Through his acquisition of knowledge of his community and writing of articles about it, he became well-known as the local historian. If one wanted information about the history of Burgeo, one simply asked Aubrey.

As an affirmation of his high esteem in the community of Burgeo as an outstanding, dedicated teacher and a loyal, dedicated citizen, at the time of his retirement the elementary school where he taught for many years was very appropriately renamed in his honour as A.J. Matthews Elementary.

Aubrey was laid to rest in the Burgeo Community Cemetery and as a gesture of respect the school which bore his name was closed in the afternoon so that the teaching staff could attend his funeral.

He will long be remembered by his many students, colleagues and friends as a great teacher, a great friend and an outstanding citizen. As we say good-bye to him, our fondest, most sincere wish is that in the nearer presence of God he will inherit the eternal reward that he so richly deserves for trying to make the world a nicer place in which to live.

(Submitted by Rev. George Childs, colleague and friend)

JOYCE CROCKER, 1922 – 2000

On January 7, 2000 Joyce Crocker passed peacefully away at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital in St. John's.

Joyce was born at Ship Cove in Northern Newfoundland on March 7, 1922. She began teaching in 1940 and spent two years at Great Brehat. Her teaching career, however, was interrupted from 1942 to 1944 due to illness. From 1957 to 1966 she was employed as Director of Red Cross Youth for Newfoundland and Labrador and travelled extensively throughout the province visiting many schools and communities.

In 1966 she again returned to the classroom, teaching a TMR class at New Harbour, Trinity Bay. She retired in 1981 at Green's Harbour.

Joyce's family received hundreds of sympathy cards which is testimony to the fact that she was well known and respected throughout the province.

(Submitted by husband Alex)

Joyce Crocker

Net Teacher Pension Income

by EDWARD HANCOCK

We periodically receive requests from active teachers for a breakdown or comparison of the "take-home" pay they would receive as a pensioner compared with what they are receiving as an active teacher. As a result of data provided by Mr. Fred Simms, Director of Pension Benefits at the Department of Finance, we have developed the following information in response to those inquiries.

The attached tables give examples for a teacher at the top of Certificate V, Certificate VI and Certificate VII retiring in June 1999 with a total of 34 years of pensionable service (eg. 30 worked years plus 4 years of university buy-back).

It is important to note that these tables do not represent a guarantee of the level of net retirement income which a teacher will receive. The tables are generated based on a number of assumptions, including the following:

1. The teacher is retiring with 34.0 years of pensionable service.
2. The pension calculation assumes the full accrual for all years (2.22% prior to January 1, 1991 and 2% since January 1, 1991) including the 1993-94 fiscal year. In reality, a teacher's accrual will be 0.75% less than that shown as a result of government's reduced contribution to the pension during the 1993-94 fiscal year (unless the teacher 'topped up' government's reduced contribution).
3. The estimated group insurance deductions include the dependent health, basic life and basic AD & D insurance only. A teacher's other coverages would change that estimated deduction.

It should also be noted that pension payroll is based on 24 pay periods per annum and not the 26 pay periods on which the Teacher Payroll system operates.

As the tables indicate, deductions for Canada Pension Plan premiums, Employment Insurance, Teachers' Pension Plan contributions (8.5%), and NLTA fees are not applied to pension income. Also, in many cases, the gross pay being lost by a teacher who moves from Teacher Payroll to a pension income may have been salary that was taxed at a higher marginal tax rate. The only two deductions that apply to the estimated pension income are income tax and group insurance premiums.

TEACHER – TOP OF CERTIFICATE V (retiring June 1999) *

Annual Salary			$41,602.00
Per Pay Period			$1,600.06
Deductions	CPP	$51.39	
	EI	$40.87	
	TPP	$136.01	
	Income Tax	$345.84	
	NLTA Fees	$16.00	
	Insurance	$22.95	
Net Pay (26 periods)			$987.00
ANNUAL NET PAY		**$987.00 x 26**	**$25,662.00**
Accrued pension percentage			73.59%
Average Salary (5 years)			$40,961.00
Annual Pension		73.59% x $40,961.00	$30,143.00
Per Pay Period			$1,255.97
Deductions	Income Tax	$275.00	
	Insurance	$22.95	
Net Pay (24 periods)			$958.02
ANNUAL NET PENSION		**$958.02 x 24**	**$22,992.48**
ANNUAL NET DIFFERENCE		**$25,662.00 - $22,992.48**	**= $2,669.52**

In addition to the above, teachers sometimes inquire about the effect on their pension income should they decide to continue teaching for another year or two. The response to this question lies in the fact that the accrual rate in the TPP is 2% per year. That is, a teacher accrues a 2% pension value for each year worked (since 1990). A teacher at the top of Certificate VII, for example, would be retiring with an average annual salary (over the best five years) of approximately $55,000. Thus, each year worked would accrue an additional value on that teacher's annual pension equal to 2% of $55,000 or $1,100. That additional $1,100 would be added to the teacher's annual pension for life.

Inquiries on any of the above information should be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division or to personnel in the Pension Division at the Department of Finance.

Edward Hancock is the Assistant Executive Director with the NLTA.

TEACHER – TOP OF CERTIFICATE VI (retiring June 1999) *

Annual Salary			$48,186.00
Per Pay Period			$1,853.29
Deductions	CPP	$60.27	
	EI	$47.34	
	TPP	$157.53	
	Income Tax	$469.88	
	NLTA Fees	$18.53	
	Insurance	$23.40	
Net Pay (26 periods)			$1,076.34
ANNUAL NET PAY	**$1,076.34 x 26**		**$27,984.84**
Accrued pension percentage			73.59%
Average Salary (5 years)			$47,444.00
Annual Pension	73.59% x $47,444.00		$34,914.00
Per Pay Period			$1,454.76
Deductions	Income Tax	$375.00	
	Insurance	$23.40	
Net Pay (24 periods)			$1,056.36
ANNUAL NET PENSION	**$1,056.36 x 24**		**$25,352.64**
ANNUAL NET DIFFERENCE	**$27,984.84 - $25,352.64 = $2,632.20**		

TEACHER – TOP OF CERTIFICATE VII (retiring June 1999) *

Annual Salary			$54,514.00
Per Pay Period			$2,096.69
Deductions	CPP	$68.80	
	EI	$53.56	
	TPP	$178.22	
	Income Tax	$568.19	
	NLTA Fees	$20.97	
	Insurance	$23.85	
Net Pay (26 periods)			$1,183.10
ANNUAL NET PAY	**$1,183.10 x 26**		**$30,760.60**
Accrued pension percentage			73.59%
Average Salary (5 years)			$53,675.00
Annual Pension	73.59% x $53,675.00		$39,500.00
Per Pay Period			$1,645.84
Deductions	Income Tax	$460.00	
	Insurance	$23.85	
Net Pay (24 periods)			$1,161.99
ANNUAL NET PENSION	**$1,161.99 x 24**		**$27,887.76**
ANNUAL NET DIFFERENCE	**$30,760.60 - $27,887.76 = $2,872.84**		

* These numbers represent estimates only and are not intended as a specific calculation of any teacher's net pension income (see earlier comments).

Teachers retiring with fewer than 34.0 pensionable years are cautioned that the pension income will be lower and therefore these net difference figures will be more substantial in their cases.

Substitute Teachers
School Closure and Salary

by PERRY DOWNEY

If a substitute teacher is contracted to work at a school on a particular day and that school is subsequently closed due to inclement weather, lack of heating, or other cause specified under Section 32, then the substitute must receive salary for that period of time. This holds whether or not the teacher received prior notification of the school closure before leaving for school or arriving at school.

The particular article of the Collective Agreement dealing with this issue is Article 49.04, and it distinguishes between situations when the school is closed for weather or any other cause (under Section 32 of the Schools Act), as compared to situations when the school is still open but previously contracted substitute services are not required for some other reason.

Article 49.04 (a) states that: *For salary purposes, substitute teachers shall be deemed to have kept school on any day or part thereof where the school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act.* That section of the Schools Act requires that a teacher in a school shall, for the purpose of determining payment of salary, be considered to have taught on a day or part of it when the school is closed for any of the reasons contained in that section. These reasons would include: inclement weather, by order of the Minister of Health for health reasons, school repairs, failure of the sewage system or other cause of a similar nature, lack of heat, etcetera. Thus, if school is closed, under Section 32 and Article 49.04 (a), previously contracted substitute teachers are "deemed to have kept school" and must receive salary.

However, if the services of a substitute teacher are not required for reasons other than school closure under Section 32, and the teacher is notified before arriving at the school, then the substitute teacher doesn't receive pay. For example, if a substitute teacher was contracted to substitute for another teacher who would be attending a workshop, and the workshop was cancelled, the substitute teacher would not be paid for the day, provided prior notification (i.e. notification prior to reporting for duty) was given.

These latter situations are covered under Article 49.04 (b), which states that: *For salary purposes, substitute teachers shall be deemed to have kept school on any day or part thereof where previously contracted substitute services are not required for any other reason(s), and the substitute teacher is not notified prior to reporting for duty at the school that his or her services are not required.*

Additional information on this issue can be found in the NLTA Infosheet "Substitute Teacher Member and Benefits." Inquires on this matter should be directed to the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services Division, at the NLTA.

Group Insurance Update
Changes in Plan Design
Effective January 1, 2001

In August 2000, all insured members were informed via a memo of changes which would take place in the insurance program for the 2000-01 school year. This is a reminder of those changes which took effect January 1, 2001.

1. The Ground Transportation Benefit of the Health Insurance Plan will have a 500 km per calendar year pooled deductible for ground transportation. For example, if 20 return trips of 100 km were required to a medical or surgical specialist or to the nearest hospital for special hospital services, the transportation benefit is applicable to 2,000 - 500 = 1,500 km (i.e. 80% of 8¢ per km x 1,500 = $96).
2. The Health Insurance Plan will include Viagra in the coverage of erectile disfunction drugs to a combined benefit maximum payment of $500 per calendar year for this category.
3. The Vision Care Benefit of the Health Insurance Plan will be changed to provide coverage for glasses for eligible dependent children under age 18 every calendar year with the change in prescription.
4. Dental claims will continue to be paid based on the 1998 Newfoundland fee guide for dental services.

Although these changes were approved by the NLTA Group Insurance Trustees in the summer 2000, the effective date was not until January 1, 2001. Hence this additional reminder.

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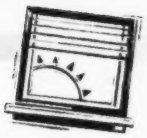

The New Person on Staff
Helping Alleviate Stress

by KATHY TAYLOR-ROGERS

The majority of people in the workforce face job changes or changes in location of one's job from time to time for a variety of different reasons. Within the teaching profession, movement from one job or location to another can be fairly common. This requirement for moving around has probably never been so prevalent than it has in recent years. No matter how frequently this may happen it does not lessen the potential impact it can have on the person involved.

As a new member on staff you could fall into one of two categories: a new teacher with no previous teaching experience; or a teacher with any number of years experience in other schools who has for one reason or another had to transfer or be reassigned. Regardless of which category you fall into, the experience is stressful and potentially anxiety provoking. The unknown always creates some degree of stress and anxiety, but some people cope with this stress better than others. There can be many uncertainties and unanswered questions such as: What will my colleagues be like?; Will people like me?; What will the administration be like?; How much support will I receive during difficult times?; What will the job expectations be?; Am I up for a new challenge?; How helpful will my colleagues be if I need advice?; What outstanding issues are there within the school? And the list can go on and on. Usually over time, the anxiety becomes greatly reduced. Those who were new to a school in September usually start to feel more comfortable and relaxed in their new environment as the year progresses.

We can all play a role in helping alleviate some of the stress associated with being a new staff member. One suggestion is to establish a welcoming committee within your school and have a colleague from the faculty assigned to each new teacher on staff as their peer support person. This colleague would be the person who the new teacher can go to and ask questions regarding all of the formal and informal procedures, policies, protocols and practices within the school. It is important that the individual performing the role as peer support person make the new teacher feel comfortable about coming to them for advice at any time and on any matter. Only those comfortable in this role should volunteer to take it on. It should not be a mandatory assignment.

"We have all been the new staff member at some point in our career and we can all play a part in trying to make the transition for our new staff members as easy and painless as possible."

One of the most awkward parts of starting at a new location is not knowing the "norm"; not knowing what the routine is for the staff. There are any number of practices in every workplace that everyone takes for granted and many times people forget to ensure that new staff members are made aware of them. These practices and expectations can be such things as social club expectations, the expectation to assist with clean-up of the lunch room, the schedule of regular staff meetings, and coffee protocols, just to name a few. There are so many of these types of expectations that it is easy to forget to tell someone about all of them. Your school may want to give some thought to developing an information handbook. This could contain information on everything that a new staff member may need to know. This handbook would always be a "work in progress", and new staff members would be an invaluable resource in providing you with feedback on any information that needs to be added.

Another suggestion is to try to plan a social event early in the school year so staff have an opportunity to get to know one another in a more informal environment. This gives everyone a chance to spend time with each other in a neutral setting without the

formality of the work environment. Peer support is essential to good staff relations and can really assist with overall stress levels. A positive environment between and among your staff can greatly assist in counterbalancing the day to day stressors being faced in the classroom.

We have all been that new staff member at some point in our career and we can all play a part in trying to make the transition for our new staff members as easy and painless as possible. Sometimes we get so caught up in the busy pace of our own lives and job responsibilities that we forget to take the time to recognize what others are going through. The little comments, actions and offers of support can make a big difference. One caution though, we don't want to overwhelm new staff with "office politics" right from the start. Give them time to orient themselves to their new work environment and let them make their own judgements on what is happening in the work place.

We also need to be cognizant of our own level of negativity and how and where we express that. Negativity does nothing to improve our lives or enhance our work environment. If we see something we don't like, then the proactive step to take is to identify possible ways to improve the situation. Unloading our resentments and problems on the new staff person because they are a potential sympathetic ear is selfish and irresponsible. If there are concerns that will affect them, then they will figure them out on their own and can formulate their own ideas and thoughts on the matter.

We all need to feel positive energy particularly when faced with a new situation which is going to be an important part of our lives. We can all be a part of making those first few weeks as positive an experience as possible for someone new. The most interesting and exciting part about this is that we feel good when we take a part in making other people feel good.

Kathy Taylor-Rogers is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Kathy Taylor-Rogers (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

Wellness Wisdom

from the Employee Assistance Program for teachers

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- seek information;
- communicate our needs;
- take care of ourselves physically;
- ask questions of others and look for guidance;
- accept the change;
- think positively;
- be open to unexpected outcomes;
- pay attention to stress symptoms;
- develop strategies for dealing with stress.

"CHANGE IS A NATURAL PART OF LIFE;
ACCEPT IT, LEARN FROM IT AND GROW WITH IT."

Please send your comments or suggestions to:
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A New Century of Learning

The Roles of Educational Personnel

by WAYNE NOSEWORTHY

The June and December issues of *The Bulletin* gave an overview of my experiences at the International Labour Organization's (ILO) meetings concerning lifelong learning, held in Geneva, Switzerland in April of 2000. As well, in my most recent contribution I focused on Lifelong Learning Systems: Concepts, Policies, Access and Funding.

My commitment at that time was to provide a third and concluding item dealing with the roles, responsibilities and professional development needs of educators in general.

As referenced previously, the "platform" for discussions at these meetings was a background paper titled *Lifelong Learning in the 21st Century: The Changing Roles of Educational Personnel*, prepared through the coordination of Mr. Bill Ratteree, Educational Specialist, Sectoral Activities Department of the ILO. Based on the findings of Mr. Ratteree's research and the extensive debate that occurred in the sessions in Geneva, I offer the following observations. The summary of ideas and issues which follow is based on a compilation of discussion outcomes from educational leaders and convention participants from every corner of the world community. Perhaps not surprisingly, the issues identified and conclusions reached are very similar to the debate that is occurring in Canada, and more particularly, in our own province of Newfoundland and Labrador, at this time of educational reform and redefinition.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Administrators and "School Heads"

The current and emerging areas of responsibilities for educators in leadership positions can best be categorized under the following elements:

- forecasting and planning for instructional and organizational change;
- providing advisory services and communication strategies with staff, students, and constituents in the broader community;
- developing strategic visions/strategic plans for schooling institutions;
- determining new and increased means of fundraising to support state operated educational facilities;
- encouraging and organizing staff professional development;
- evaluating staff, both professional and support;
- providing leadership to foster greater innovation, teamwork, and collaboration in a network of learning sites.

2. Teachers

The major theme identified regarding teachers themselves was a need for greater professionalization which, in the view of researchers and convention participants, meant more responsibility for determining learning outcomes and more accountability with respect to realizing those outcomes. In general, it was felt that the following would be necessary if this is to occur:

- more autonomy has to be given to teachers for curriculum development and change within centrally determined standards;
- teachers must be given the opportunity and means to do research and to reflect on and develop alternate approaches to instruction, leading to collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching;
- teachers must be continuously responsible for the general assessment of student progress and failure;
- teachers must be capable of dealing with work modifications, especially as it relates to classroom organization in a collaborative atmosphere, working with educational support staff and parents;
- teachers working at the post-secondary level have a greater responsibility to provide a balance between research, teaching, and "outreach activities", i.e., working with students, communities and work places;
- teachers must be provided a means to eliminate low "computer literacy" and defensive reaction/rejection of information and communications technology by:

a) systematic and appropriate training, especially in the area of initial teacher education;
b) more involvement of teaching staff in planning and implementing technological change.

3. Support Staff
The following would be the key findings/conclusions regarding auxiliary personnel:
• the roles and numbers of support staff should increase throughout the educational system (primary, elementary, secondary);
• support staff should be utilized to facilitate more collaborative learning approaches;
• support staff should be utilized to encourage greater partnerships with parents and students while, at the same time, allowing teachers to maintain professional responsibility.

Lifelong Learning for Educators
The notion of lifelong learning emphasized the central theme of the conference and focused on the following main elements:
• Worldwide, there is a critical need for higher levels for teacher education at the university level.
• Teacher education must become more diversified and the programs of teacher training institutions must be able to find a means to ensure that the in-school performance of teachers is strengthened, in part, by the following:
1. there must be a "mixing" of teacher learning sites, offering more school-based, network, and distant training models;
2. the strategic objectives of teacher training must be altered so as to provide a greater link to educators' needs as they work towards ensuring overall school improvement.
• Systematic, well-funded, and accessible teacher education must be provided rather than the ad hoc programs that are too often evident.
• There must be strong individual and institutional commitment to lifelong learning for all educational personnel.

Professional and Career Development
Summarized below are the key elements which were brought forward both in the research and at the conclusion of the conference:
• Professional development for teachers must be directly linked to redesigned career structures. The system must reward high levels of competence, skill, and performance, not just formal qualifications and seniority.
• It is critical that job satisfaction and performance be increased through:
1. more open and diversified career structures;
2. different paths to positions of responsibility;
3. non linear criteria for promotion;
4. more fluidity between education and other professional job possibilities, e.g. exchanges between school and public or enterprise staff.
• Staff appraisal (teacher evaluation systems, which were seen as the linchpins for performance and career development), should:
1. involve staff and their unions in defining content and processes;
2. conceivably involve more elements of peer appraisal.
• There must be a greater gender balance in career opportunity and there must be a significant growth in the percentage of female administrators. This is seen as having many positive implications for more collaborative, team-based organization of the overall schooling operation.

"... it was unbelievable to hear the level of challenge for educators, and society in general, from countries throughout the developing and underdeveloped parts of the world."

The opportunity to participate in this once in a lifetime professional event was in some respects overwhelming, and in others, amazing. I was continuously struck by the commonality of approaches to educational reform, particularly in the developed countries. On the other hand, it was unbelievable to hear the level of challenge for educators, and society in general, from countries throughout the developing and underdeveloped parts of the world. The need for qualified and well trained teachers, adequate resources, and even rudimentary school facilities is particularly daunting.

While those of us in the Western world can identify any number of areas where education can be improved and can point towards ways and means of accomplishing those improvements, educators and educational leaders in these underdeveloped countries have a challenge that can only be met through the cooperation and generosity of the developed world. In my view, countries like Canada, the United States and other Western societies must shoulder a greater share of the responsibility for helping to train our colleagues worldwide and to ensure that every child has hope for realizing a quality education.

Wayne Noseworthy is Executive Director of the NLTA.

Program Specialist's SIC Conference

Reflections and Connections

by ROSS ELLIOTT

The Program Specialist's Special Interest Council (PSSIC) held its annual conference, entitled *Reflections and Connections*, at Gander on November 14-16, 2000. This conference was remarkable for its attempts to forge relationships with all educational agencies and for its collaborative focus on improving program implementation in the province.

Contributors to the conference sessions and discussions included Alex Hickey, Director of Curriculum; Eldred Barnes, Chair of the Ministerial Panel Implementation Committee; Beverley Park, Professional Development Division of the NLTA; Elizabeth Murphy, teacher and member of the NLTA Executive; Dr. Barbara Burnaby, Dean of Education at Memorial University; and Harvey Weir, Director of Continuing Education at Memorial University.

"Increasingly, our daily work is shaped by school-based growth and development plans as well as Department of Education initiatives, and our challenge is to maintain balance and forge connections between the two."

The expectations for this conference were best described by PSSIC President Wayne Hallett: to clarify the collaborative roles of provincial agencies; to identify and strengthen connections between provincial agencies; to facilitate a more collaborative working environment; and to develop a better model for the delivery of educational services and teacher professional development. The conference focused on these objectives through a combination of small and whole group reflection. This article highlights some key learnings and directions which emerged from these discussions.

The Change Process

Real change, and real support for teachers and students, can come about only through the co-ordinated collaboration of all partners in education. The Professional Development Alliance (recommended in the Ministerial Panel Report) will have a crucial role in articulating a vision for change and providing sound implementation support. Some challenges in the implementation process include proving individual and organizational learning opportunities across all levels of the system, ensuring equity of access to resources and professional development, and distributing accountability for implementation.

The Program Specialist's Role

The role of the program specialist is to support, facilitate, and assist in the design of the implementation process. This includes interpreting the local context, recognizing barriers, building support, and sheltering innovations during turbulence and uncertainty. Our role is one of two-way communication between the realities of local schools and districts and the curriculum initiatives of the province. We must constantly clarify, mediate, support, and occasionally challenge provincial and local implementation efforts. Our perspective must be grounded in the realities of school and classroom needs, and in a developing knowledge of the best ways to honour and support teacher practice. Increasingly, our daily work is shaped by school-based growth and development plans as well as Department of Education initiatives, and our challenge is to maintain balance and forge connections between the two. Likewise, our role increasingly is to identify and support

teacher leaders and to facilitate teacher-led professional development and on-going communication.

Our continued learning as program specialists is essential as we adapt to new roles and conditions. About 50 program specialists (at one time there were about 250) now contend with a larger geography, fewer substitute days for in-service, and greater diversity of local needs. Our own continued learning must be in implementation and change processes, facilitation skills, capacity building, and partnering with other agencies, as well as in teaching and learning. A more meaningful collaboration is one source of such learning. Such collaboration and such deliberate focus on individual, organizational, and inter-agency learning are crucial to the changing times and our changing roles.

The Ministerial Panel Report

The Ministerial Panel Report offers a direction for education which can be implemented only by all partners working together with clearly defined roles and direction. Financial and human resources are needed at all levels, including (as the report emphasizes) at the Department level where the important tasks of development and planning are initiated. The proposed Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, and increased paid time for professional development, are particularly important recommendations of the report. Public exams were also endorsed by PSSIC, but with some concerns that the recommended format might impact negatively on teaching and learning.

Beyond the specific recommendations, the report also emphasizes (and we agree!) clear, focused, incremental approaches to implementation so that the whole system can develop confidence from specific successes. Such rigorous planning requires a simultaneous focus on curriculum development, professional development, accountability, and overall resourcing. Let's not take on things we can't finish, and don't under-resource to the point that we end up with a pale imitation of the educational vision.

Program Implementation

Effective program implementation can only occur through the co-ordinated efforts of the Department's Program Development Division, the district's Program Division, and schools. One way to support such co-ordination is for the Department and school districts to develop multi-year professional development plans as new curriculum is developed, and to put this information on-line. Additionally, professional development might have an on-line component to reinforce main ideas and provide

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opportunities for continuous learning. Professional development needs to be tailored to different contexts depending on school need, current teacher expertise, or the presence of multi-age grouping.

Broader initiatives such as mentoring, teacher induction, teacher growth plans, and action research, can also support program implementation. Above all, the voice of the classroom teacher must influence planners and planning, and teachers must have time to internalize, practice, assess, and experience success with new curricula.

Learning with Accountability

The educational context has been influenced by accountability for student learning and for creating effective schools and districts. Increased accountability requires pre-service training and sustained professional development on student evaluation and assessment. Such professional development should include the provision of samples and rubrics, professional literature, and resource banks of best evaluation practices.

"... the voice of the classroom teacher must influence planners and planning, and teachers must have time to internalize, practice, assess, and experience success with new curricula."

A major challenge for educators at every level is to understand accountability initiatives, to sequence these initiatives in realistic ways, and to combine internal with external accountability. Forging coherence and connections among the Department's strategic plan, district strategic plans, school growth and development plans, and individual teacher growth plans is essential in the accountability era.

Technology and Learning

Technology can be a tremendous asset to professional development, student learning, communication and the management of information. Accessibility, equality, professional development, and co-ordination of effort and expenditure are just a few of the challenges around technology. The proposed Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, the NLTA's Virtual Teacher Centre, and the Professional Development Alliance, should enhance the use of technology for learning and communication in the province.

Teacher Education

Dr. Barbara Burnaby, Memorial's Dean of Education, welcomed collective input into redesigning Memorial University's teacher education programs. The PSSIC has recommended that an interagency steering committee be set up to examine issues of teacher training.

Looking Ahead

Since the conference, the PSSIC executive and representatives from other agencies have met to initiate action on the issues discussed at the conference. These initial plans include the following:

- professional development for program specialists;
- representation on the Professional Development Alliance;
- further communication with MUN on teacher education and induction;
- an attempt to co-ordinate communication on professional development offerings at all levels;
- collaborative pursuit of improved bandwidth through fiber;
- the development of a PSSIC web site;
- facilitating sharing of resources among districts;
- hosting a symposium on assessment; and
- redesigning teacher certification to recognize a broader variety of professional development experiences.

Finally, a word of thanks to the PSSIC executive and the conference organizers – from District 5, Wayne Hallett, Bruce White, Bonnie Lane-McCarthy, Harold Warr, Keith Collins, Ruth Down-Robinson, Doug Furey, Phyllis Deering, and Frank Norman; from District 6, Bob Hepditch and Janice Tucker; from the NLTA, René Wicks; and from the Department, Alex Hickey. It is no small task to organize a Special Interest Council Conference, especially one as successful as this, which has such broad representation and provides so many opportunities for continued collaborative initiatives.

Ross Elliott is a Program Specialist with the Avalon West School District.

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The Hidden Curriculum

by SHELDON MCBREARITY

Consider the following: a) A comparison of a teacher's January 1999 cheque with one from the same pay period in January 1990 reveals there was $40 more take home pay in 1990; b) The $5,280 I owed for my entire post-secondary education represented about 20% of my starting salary in 1979 while my son will likely owe about 200% of his starting salary when he finishes. Are these examples of economic boom and recovery?

I recently read a number of books critically examining macro economic perspectives of the day and I have drawn two main conclusions: 1) There is not now nor was there ever a serious debt crisis – the real crisis was in the amount of return on investment for the very rich; if the federal debt disappeared, the banks and their investors would be the unhappiest of all, and ; 2) There is no real economic boom or recovery for the vast majority of Canadians; financially, Canadians are worse off than they've been in 20 years. The myths of debt crisis and miraculous recovery have been foisted on us while child poverty increased by 43% and the number of millionaires in Canada increased by 300%; while $1 billion less in Employment Insurance payments was made to this province; while the federal government portion of the health care budget in this country shrunk from 40% to 13%.

"Pensions, health care, public housing, unemployment insurance are all being portrayed by corporations as extravagances, things that governments can't afford to provide for us."

Accompanying these realities has been a tide of misinformation. As a result, the hidden curriculum that we now teach our children includes the following: you are lucky to have a job, so take what is given to you without question; the 60 hour work week is normal; enormous student debt is normal; government debt is abnormal; unions impede progress and don't belong in the modern age; homelessness, poverty, and unemployment equal laziness; the wealth of the few will trickle down to the many; downsizing and layoffs are necessary and good; what's good for the corporate boardroom is good for Canadians. I could go on but you get the picture.

These concepts amount to deception and myth, and in many cases are being promoted most vigorously by corporate funded organizations which describe themselves as "independent public policy" and "non-partisan" and "non-profit" organizations. They include The Fraser Institute, The C.D. Howe Institute, The National Citizen's Coalition, The Public Policy Forum, and The Business Council on National Issues. They all have web pages where you can readily examine their basic doctrines. Consider excerpts from a few of the current offerings from the Fraser Institute web page (www.fraserinstitute.ca/):

• "Bad Canadians? No. Bad System"

Our system of "free" government services has bred in our politicians a bizarre mix of control (my synonym for dirigisme) and abdication… Free services need to be rationed… Allowing someone higher up to decide what sort of health and education we consume stifles individuality.

• "Destructive Power of EI Reintroduced in Atlantic Canada"

The proposed un-reform of employment insurance could devastate young lives and communities across Atlantic Canada… Many economists believe EI's generosity should be kept low so that young people in Atlantic Canada will go where the opportunities are.

• "Child Poverty & Child Hunger"

In my writing on poverty in Canada, I have frequently referred to a popular "sleight of hand" trick used by those associated with the social welfare community… While the prospect of child hunger is obviously very heart-wrenching and emotional, some perspective is clearly in order… Child hunger is not rampant, nor is it a crisis… Canadians are not well served by inflated, unsubstantiated claims.

Is this what we believe, that government services in

health and education need to be further reduced, that 10,000 people leaving this Province each year is a good thing, that child poverty and hunger are figments of our imagination? As we consider these messages, let us consider the ultimate end for societies that espouse such ideology, and the role that educators can play in providing alternative perspectives. John Kenneth Galbraith (*The Socially Concerned Today*) expressed the following:

Capitalism in its original form was an insufferably cruel thing. Only with trade unions, the protection of workers and workers rights, pensions for the old, compensation for the unemployed, public health care, lower cost housing, a safety net, however imperfect, for the unfortunate and the deprived, and public action to mitigate capitalism's commitment to boom and slump did the market system become socially and politically acceptable. Let us not be reticent: we the socially concerned are the custodians of the political tradition and action that saved classical capitalism from itself.

Take a moment and reflect on what we have been told and likely what we have passed on to our children. Pensions, health care, public housing, unemployment insurance are all being portrayed by corporations as extravagances, things that governments can't afford to provide for us. Professor Galbraith summarizes these complaints as someone trying to convince us that... "the rich are not working because they have too little income, the poor because they have too much". He goes on to say that in his early farming days it was known as the "horse and sparrow theory... that if you feed the horse enough oats, some will pass through to the road for the sparrows".

I would encourage us to examine with diligence the hidden curriculum we deliver everyday as parents and as educators, and to ask whether these are the messages we want to send. Children need to believe in economic opportunity for more than a select few and a reinstatement of adequate levels of funding to public institutions. They need to begin to identify the private, "for profit" voice as being just that – for personal profit and gain. In short, children need to feel hopeful for the future. The messages of the past two decades have not been hopeful for children or for adults. The tragedy is that these "for profit" messages are masquerading as being for "the greater good", and for the most part we have bought in, "hook, line and sinker".

For a more thorough discussion of these issues you may wish to also consider the following books: *The End of Work* by Jeremy Rifkin, *The Cult of Impotence* by Linda McQuaig, *The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen* by Murray Dobbin, *Pay the Rent or Feed the Kids* by Mel Hurtig, and *Paper Boom* by Jim Stanford.

Sheldon McBrearity is Program Specialist, Student Support Services, with School District #6.

Memorial
University of Newfoundland

Diploma Programme in Technology Education

The Faculty of Education is now accepting applications for the Diploma in Technology Education to be offered in the 2001 Summer Session in St. John's. The courses address the development of skills and competencies in the technological curriculum areas of communications and information, design and problem solving, control, production, power and energy, and integrated technology, largely those that are featured in the Technology Education courses in Newfoundland and Labrador schools. Many course components utilize computer-based systems, competence with which is developed starting in the first summer. Nine of the ten required Diploma courses are offered over three summer sessions.

If you are interested in applying for this programme, contact the Office of Undergraduate Student Services, Faculty of Education by phone at 737-3405 or by e-mail at **muneduc@mun.ca** for the appropriate information as soon as possible. Space in the program is limited.

Note that additional information is also available at: **http://www.mun.ca/educ/fac_web/dip_tech.html** or by contacting the Programme Coordinator, Dr. George Haché at 737-7630.

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Retroactive Payment of Salary Increments in Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union has recently won an arbitration ruling that directs that teachers who were affected by the Compensation Restraint Act (1994-97) are to be no longer affected after November 1, 1997.

To be an affected teacher, the teacher would have been employed by a School Board in Nova Scotia as a regular teacher as of August 1, 1994 in at least their second year of service and would have earned at least $25,000 in 1994-95, would have not received an increment either on August 1, 1994 or January 1, 1995 and would still not be at the top of the increment scale on November 1, 1997. These teachers would be employed in the 1997-98 academic school year or later.

If you are an affected teacher, you were still underpaid according to experience increment levels as of November 1, 1997 and you may be owed retroactive salary for the period after November 1, 1997.

If affected, please fax or telephone the Nova Scotia Teachers Union immediately. Information should be to the attention of Joan Ling.

Fax: (902) 477-3517; Tel: (902) 477-5621

Professional Development and Computer Assisted Instruction

by GERARD COOKE

"For the vast majority of teachers, wary after a decade of "computers gathering dust in the corner", technology integration inservices are badly needed."

In the business world, the computer has become a ubiquitous tool, powerful and creative. In the K-12 education system, for a number of reasons, the impact has not been as profound. Yet its potential is seen by many to be too great to be ignored.

Within this province, the infusion of computers into our schools dates back almost a decade. School computer plans and district computer plans are more recent. As well, integration rather than teaching computer courses, certainly at the primary/elementary level, is now being accepted as the preferred method.

However, the lack of professional development in this area is quite evident. For the vast majority of teachers, wary after a decade of "computers gathering dust in the corner", technology integration inservices are badly needed. From a personal perspective, the rewards can be both professionally and personally fulfilling.

Probably its most impressive skill, the computer is a powerful communication device. With Internet access students can enjoy direct access to people, services and information locally, across the country and around the world. Electronic mail, listservs and news groups allow for collaboration with individuals and groups from all walks of life. Each year since 1993, for example, my students have exchanged information with counterparts in other parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, the United States, France and Italy.

Electronic addresses have become important pieces of information. Real-time chat, e-mail exchanges, discussion lists, speech recognition-based dialog systems and video-conferencing are an everyday reality within many school programs. This type of communication is breaking down cultural and language barriers. Students are learning new skills and they are motivated because other "real-life" kids their age are on the other end of the line!

Building a web site to share student-generated work is another important use of the Internet. Its use as a productive (rather than receptive) tool is what gives it its value. We have a world audience for our children's stories and poems.

The computer is also multi functional: a recorder/record player, a television, a telephone, a VCR, a video camera and a filing cabinet, to name a few. Digital folders store lesson plans, professional papers, worksheets, evaluation sheets and student work.

As a French Immersion teacher I have used listening activities such as authentic passages with native-speaker conversations, music, and children's literature. For practice and feedback, a digital video camera not only records my student's oral presentations, but also offers an added visual dimension with accompanying gestures and body language. Visual advance organizers with video and sound provide background information on a particular topic. Multimedia annotations for key words and phrases are available on demand for vocabulary skill development and to reinforce comprehension. Writing exercises are edited and rewritten with quick and easy access to an online dictionary, thesaurus, grammar checker and spelling assistant.

Self-authoring software is another area of growing potential. As this type of software becomes more user friendly, it will be increasingly easier to adapt the learning experience to materials produced by our own students. As a part of my Master's dissertation, for example, I took a difficult text from within a curriculum resource and developed a variety of personalized multimedia annotations. The purpose was to assist with comprehension and vocabulary recognition. The software used, Glossing Authentic Language Text (GALT), created by Mary-Ann Lyman-Hager and Jim Davis of Penn State in 1997, is available free to anyone who wishes to download it. (You can contact me for the URL or you can do a search for GALT.) It also has tracker capability which helps identify learner strengths and weaknesses. I use the tracker to monitor and draw insights into media choices the student made in relation to his/her learning style, essential for individualized instruction.

Anyone familiar with *Pathways to Programming and Graduation* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998) and ISSPs will understand how important it is to develop strategies specific to individual needs. Computer assisted instruction has proven to be a valuable teaching/learning tool in this area also. For this reason and the aforementioned, it becomes increasingly important, then, that parent/teacher groups (and particularly administrators, since funding for resources is ultimately controlled by them) push to have teachers inserviced in its proper use.

Gerard Cooke is French Immersion teacher at Sacred Heart Elementary School in Marystown.

Setting the Table

Achieving Optimum Learning Levels

by TODD SPURRELL

Setting the table for Christmas dinner has, in my home, become something of an event. We all take part in decorating the table in an attempt to make it as perfect as we can imagine. It is, in a sense, one more gift which we give each other. And it is probably because it is a gift that we appreciate it as much as we do. The table truly becomes worthy of a feast for the occasion. This year, like others, when we began eating we were in no way timid; we dug into turkey and cranberry sauce alike with great relish.

After dinner, when all I could do was sit and think, I wondered how my students were enjoying their Christmas Day. I thought about how great it would be if I could set a table from which they could learn with the same enthusiasm as I had just shown in eating that dinner.

When we, as teachers, properly set the table we can maximize the amount of learning which takes place. To achieve optimum learning levels, our students must want to be involved in the learning process. When they are willingly and enthusiastically involved, they will actively attach new information and processes taught to existing knowledge nodes.

"When we... properly set the table we can maximize the amount of learning which takes place. To achieve optimum learning levels, our students must want to be involved in the learning process."

This may all seem simple enough and we may be able to theorize about it all day long, but how do we set this table? How do we entice our students to actively take hold of their learning?

I think the answer, in part anyway, is to close the gap between us - between teacher and student. I think when we allow our students into our lives and they allow us into their lives we will have set a table from which we can both take a lot of enjoyment and learning. When our table is set with genuine mutual respect the gap between us will lessen and we will both enjoy the teaching-learning process.

It is necessary to allow some of what students want to happen in their classroom. If a student has a problem it is likely the case that other students already know about it and they want to talk about it. As the teacher we can force the lesson on them immediately; we can ensure by whatever means that the class does not talk about that particular problem. The result, of course, is that the problem remains utmost on their minds and any lesson we might have planned takes a back seat. The students may complete questions, they may finish a math problem, but is will probably have been done with a lot less active involvement on their part. And, if active involvement means maximized learning, then we have not allowed for that learning to take place.

If, on the other hand, our students were able to discuss this problem for a few minutes, they may very well feel better about the whole situation and it would be out of the way, allowing for more active involvement. Also, because they now know that we are genuinely interested in their lives, they will respect us a whole lot more and resist us a whole lot less.

I am certainly not suggesting that we set aside the first ten minutes of every class for discussion of student problems. In fact, there are several other areas of the learning table where we can discuss a problem, talk about a hockey game or even the weather. One such area is extra-curricular activities. Students appreciate wholeheartedly our efforts after hours. When we come into the school at night with a group of students to play basketball or tie flies, they enjoy it. They are part of a select group who are now special because they are different from all others and they appreciate that and us for enabling them to be special. This appreciation spreads into the classroom and pays incredible dividends. Even discussions with students during recess corridor duty can allow us a glimpse into their lives which can close the gap between us. When we become more aware of the social intricacies of our students' lives we can appreciate these people in the classroom much more. We are setting the table for willing and active involvement in the learning process. Once we set this table, I think students will enthusiastically involve themselves in the learning process, making it so much more meaningful.

Todd Spurrell is English Department Head at Botwood Collegiate.

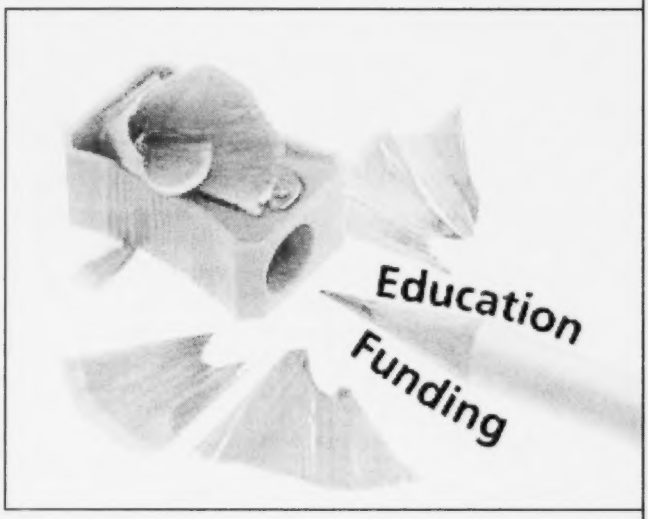
Let's Talk About Education

I buy all the markers, pens, resource books, stickers, awards etc. from my own money. Have to be cautious with the number of copies as the copy block is always over budget. Too many students in each class – students are not getting the attention they need.

– A grade 4 teacher

Extra books are impossible to come by and some students cannot afford them. Some supplies like construction paper, hole punches, staplers, etc. are on the back burner so that we have the money for photocopying.

– A junior high school teacher



Shaving away education funding is harming our public school system.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils are committed to achieving excellence in education.

Our children are 25% of the population and 100% of our future.

RESOURCES

WEAVING CONNECTIONS

Weaving Connections, edited by Tara Goldstein and David Selby, is a timely new anthology which explores educational models based on the principles of tolerance and respect as developed by teachers, parents, students and activists. Thirty years of developments in equity, justice, peace and earth awareness in education are now under direct threat within an increasingly pervasive culture of corporate consumerism. "Back to basics," centralization of control, conformist concepts of citizenship, corporate intrusion, "doing more with less", and deprofessionalization of teachers are current educational trends which are examined and challenged in this remarkable collection.

Weaving Connections is a call to action that invites us to cherish educational models that teach us how to live in harmony, respect and balance with one another.

Tara Goldstein is an Associate Professor of Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). David Selby is a Professor and a Director of the International Institute for Global Education at OISE/UT.

400 pages, 6" x 9", $19.95/CAN.

POSTERS BRING HISTORY TO LIFE

Parks Canada and the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, in partnership with the Department of Education, have launched their first Poster Series "Soldiering in Newfoundland".

The Poster Set is designed to give teachers a complete unit on military history and to make them aware of the rich resources available at the National Historic Sites. The set of nine posters tells the story of British and French soldiers in Newfoundland approximately 300 years ago. Each poster adds to the student's knowledge about soldiering but the posters may be used individually. The posters use photographs, drawings, and artwork to enhance and bring to life the information contained in reproducible black line masters on the backs of the posters.

Although this first set of posters will be an important interactive curriculum resource for teachers of Grade 5 Social Studies, the historical information will prove valuable for teachers at any level. Information and order forms have already been sent to schools across the province.

For further information call the Historic Sites Association at 1-877-753-9262 or e-mail nhpa@nfld.com.

Editor's Choice for Resources on the Web

www.childnet-int.org
Childnet International is a non-profit organization which works around the world with the aim of making the Internet a great place for children. Childnet was established in 1995 to work in four key areas: access (to technology and quality content); awareness (net literacy and safety advice); protection (of children from harm); policy (developing strategic responses to issues arising from children's use of the Internet). This site contains great information on Internet safety, chat danger, publications, a section for kids, awards and links to wonderful resources and safe sites.

www.heritage.nf.ca/home.html
The Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage site is an excellent resource for information about Newfoundland and Labrador. It exists in both English and French and contains links to school projects, the *Dictionary of Newfoundland*, as well as an excellent site map to guide the viewer. Information can be found on the following topics: geography; maps; provincial facts and figures; national environment; aboriginal peoples; society; economy and culture; exploration and settlement; the arts; government and politics.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION "CROSSCURRENTS CONFERENCE"

March 15-16, 2001

Vancouver. This conference addresses special education concerns of regular classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, special educators and parents. Early bird fees $130 one day, $180 two days. For information contact Madeline Pohlmann, Fax: 604-885-9193, E-mail: mpohlmann@sd46.bc.ca, or visit the BCTF web site at www.bctf.bc.ca/psas/SEA.

MARGARET WILLIAMS TRUST FUND AWARD

March 30, 2001 (application deadline)

Applications are now invited for the Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award which has been established to promote the development of librarianship in Newfoundland and Labrador. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to applicants seeking funding for library related projects or assistance in pursuing graduate studies in Library Science. Annual awards generally approximate $1,000. For information and an application form, contact Mr. Richard Ellis, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Margaret Williams Trust Fund, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF, A1B 3Y1.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

April 4 - 6, 2001

Glynmill Inn, Corner Brook. Theme: *The Leadership Dilemma*. Contact: Robert Matthews, Tel: 709-639-8945, Fax: 709-639-1698; or Victor May, Tel: 709-635-2337, Fax: 709-635-2995.

THE QUEST FOR CHARACTER: AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CHARACTER EDUCATION

April 26-28, 2001

Toronto. The York Region District School Board presents a Conference on Character Education for teachers, administrators, superintendents, student leaders, trustees, school councils, business and community partners. Symposium fee: $495 per person. Contact Barb Rowe, Tel: 416-223-6164, Fax: 416-223-5657, E-mail: BarbRowe@compuserve.com.

CAP CONFERENCE

May 16-18, 2001

Winnipeg. Theme: *Democracy and Educational Leadership into the New Millennium*. Speakers include John Ralston Saul, Stephen Lewis and Michael Fullan. For information check the CAP web site at www.resd.mb.ca/cap2001.

ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION IN CANADA (AMTEC) CONFERENCE

June 3-6, 2001

Halifax. Theme: *Making it Work: Effective Educational Technology in the New Millennium*. Sessions focus on the latest issues and developments on topics such as using technology in the classroom, copyright law, instructional design, distance education and adaptive technologies in learning environments. Check out the AMTEC web page (www.amtec.ca/amtec2001) for information on conference registration, the Association, relevant links to educational technology sites, and the presentation proposal form.

SOCIETY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGH EDUCATION (STLHE) 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 13-16, 2001

St. John's. The STLHE conference has a long-standing reputation for excellence in providing an interactive teaching- and learning-related program to educators from across North America and beyond. Registration information and a preliminary program can be found on the STLHE 2001 web site at www.mun.ca/stlhe2001.

13TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES

September 27-29, 2001

Halifax. Share information/knowledge about learning disabilities with experts from across North America. Tel: 902-423-2850; Fax: 902-423-2834; E-mail: ldans@ns.sympatico.ca; Web site: www.nsnet.org/ldans.

MUSIC

October 19-21, 2001

St. John's. Contact: Mary Dinn, Tel: 709-579-9111, Fax: 709-579-2448.

Dates/Deadlines

MARCH 2001

Mar 4-10	Education Week
Mar 8/9	NLTA Executive Meeting
Mar 15	Deadline: Professional Development Fund Applications
Mar 31	Board Deadline: Notice for retirement at end of school year
Mar 31	Deadline – Centennial Fund Award Nominations: International Conference Presenter; Educational Research Program; Project Awards; Study Awards

APRIL 2001

Apr 1	Deadline: Johnson Bursary Applications
Apr 15	Deadline: Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
Apr 17-20	Biennial General Meeting
Apr 30	Deadline: Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30	Deadline: Year-end resignation from contract

MAY 2001

May 7	Deadline: Notification by Board of layoff
May 13-19	Branch Election Week
May 17	Deadline: Professional Development Fund applications

JUNE 2001

June 8-9	NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15	Deadline: Notification by Board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests

JULY 2001

July 31	Deadline: NLTA Scholarship Applications